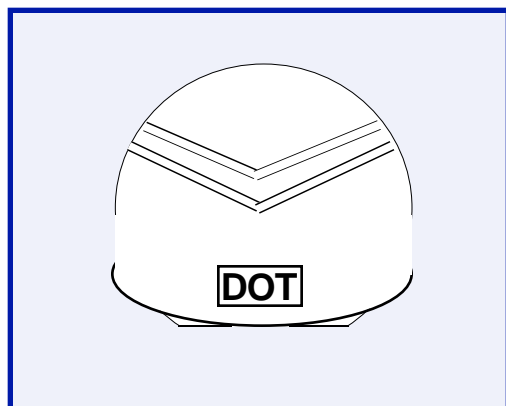


## MOTORCYCLE SAFETY HELMETS

A motorcycle helmet is by far the most important piece of safety equipment you can use while riding a motorcycle. Head injuries are the leading cause of death in motorcycle crashes and wearing a helmet decreases your chances of receiving a head injury.

### Certification

All helmets manufactured after October 3, 1988, must meet the Department of Transportation's (DOT) motorcycle helmet safety standard. The symbol "DOT" is the manufacturer's



▲ Figure 1. The symbol "DOT" is the manufacturer's certification that the helmet meets the safety standards.

### INSIDE

- Care and Replacement
- Auto Safety Hotline



U.S. Department  
of Transportation  
National Highway  
Traffic Safety  
Administration

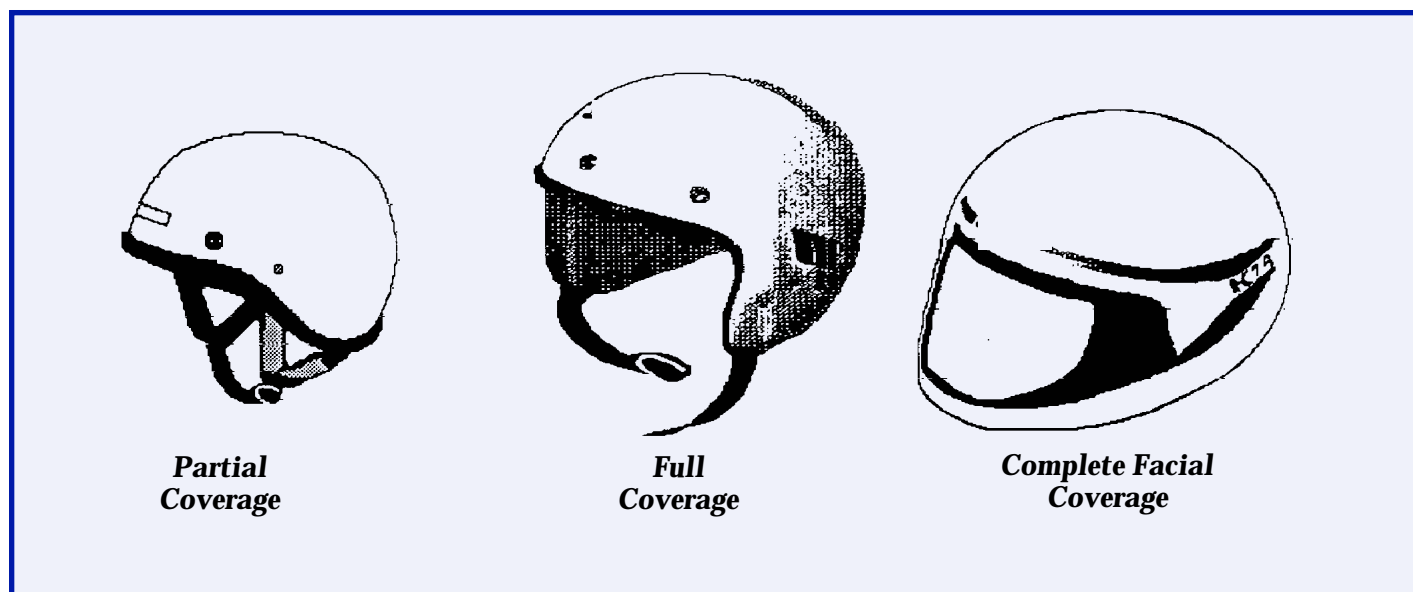
certification that the helmet conforms to the applicable Federal motor vehicle safety standards. The manufacturer affixes a "DOT" symbol on the outside back of the helmet. (See Figure 1.) Also, manufacturers must label or mark the inside of the helmet with their name, the helmet's model and size, the month and year of manufacture, construction material, and instructions on the proper care of the helmet.

Two other organizations, ANSI (American National Standards Institute) and SNELL (Snell Memorial Foundation) have established **voluntary** standards for motorcycle helmets. But the DOT standard is the only one the helmet must meet by law.

### Beware of Fakes

Some helmets are sold as novelty or costume helmets. They **do not** meet the DOT standard and **will not** protect your head in a crash. Here's what to check for:

- ❖ Beware of helmets that do not have a DOT label or come with a label *for you to affix*. Reputable manufacturers affix the DOT label on the helmet at the plant. By doing so, they certify the helmet meets the DOT standard.
- ❖ Depending on design, unsafe helmets weigh only one pound or less and have an inner lining of soft foam--or no lining. Helmets meeting the DOT standard have an inner lining of firm polystyrene foam--usually about an inch thick.
- ❖ Unsafe helmets are noticeably smaller in diameter, lighter (weigh about one pound), and thinner than the ones meeting the DOT standard.



▲ Figure 2. Three types of motorcycle helmets.

## Styles

There are three types of helmets: **partial** coverage, or “pudding bowl;” **full** coverage; and **full face** coverage helmets.

All three types can meet the Department of Transportation’s standard. (See Figure 2.) However, keep in mind:

*The more face and head that are covered, the greater the crash protection.*

## Fit

A helmet should fit snugly; it should not turn freely on your head. With the chin strap firmly fastened the helmet should not be removable. When rotated from

side to side and rocked from back to front, your scalp should move with the helmet. If it does not, the helmet is too large.

Helmet fit is important. Always try on a helmet before you buy it. Your motorcycle dealer should be able to help you select one that fits properly.

## Chin Strap

A helmet works only if it stays on in a crash. If you do not fasten the chin strap securely, the helmet can come off. The chin strap should be tightened until it is snug, and well back toward your throat, without cutting into your neck. While riding, periodically check to see that vibration has not caused the chin strap to loosen.

## Eye Protection

Your eyes need protection when riding a motorcycle. Insects and airborne debris can cause eye injuries and distract your attention, possibly causing a crash. Traveling without eye protection also can cause squinting and excessive tearing, both of which impair your ability to see.

Windshields provide some protection for your eyes, but not enough. Always use a face shield or goggles. Most helmets are sold with a face shield or with fasteners so one can be attached. A tinted face shield should not be used at night or under other conditions of poor visibility.

## Choosing the Color of the Helmet

Motorcycle crashes often occur because operators of other vehicles do not see the motorcycle in time to avoid a crash. Wear a brightly colored helmet with reflective stickers and a highly visible jacket or vest so you can be seen easily.

## Ride Safely

A helmet that meets the DOT standard is your best defense against a head injury in a motorcycle crash, but your best defense against being involved in a crash is to learn how to ride safely.

Classes on motorcyclist safety are available for beginners and experienced riders. Any motorcyclist can benefit from taking these courses.

To locate the courses closest to you, call the Motorcycle Safety Foundation toll-free at 1-800-447-4700. ■

# CARE AND REPLACEMENT

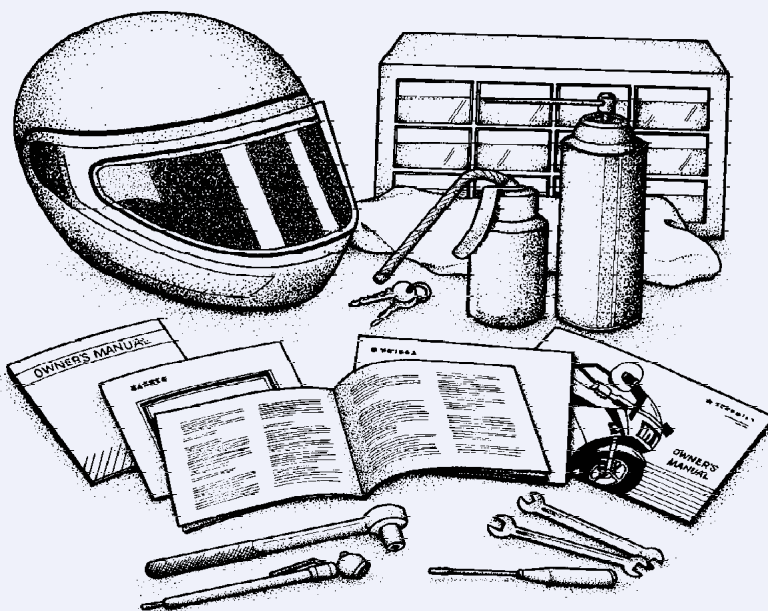
Clean the outside of your helmet with soap and water. Avoid using harsh detergents. Helmets do not last forever. Chin straps and linings wear out. Chemicals in cleaning agents, paints, adhesives and ultraviolet rays from the sun slowly deteriorate the strength of the shell.

If the helmet has been involved in a crash or dropped, it should be replaced or returned to the manufacturer for inspection to determine if it should be replaced.

Even if the outer shell does not appear to be damaged, the inner energy absorbent lining may be weakened by an impact, thus reducing the

helmet's protective value. A weakened liner is dangerous because it can no longer absorb

impact energy in the event of a crash.



Courtesy: Motorcycle Safety Foundation.

# IF YOU THINK YOUR MOTOR VEHICLE HAS A SAFETY PROBLEM, WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU

## AUTO SAFETY HOTLINE (800) 424-9393

If you think that your vehicle has a safety problem, you can assist the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) by completing and mailing back the Vehicle Owner's Questionnaire (VOQ) included with this fact sheet, or calling the Auto Safety Hotline.

The toll-free Hotline number, (800) 424-9393, can be reached from anywhere in the United States. If you are calling from the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area, the number is (202) 366-0123. A Spanish-speaking operator is available weekdays from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., Eastern time. The Hotline is available to the hearing impaired through a teleprinter (TTY) number, (800) 424-9153. In the Washington, D.C. area the TTY number is (202) 366-7800.

If it is determined that a safety defect exists, the manufacturer

has to fix the problem at no cost to the owner.

If there are any documents relevant to your case, including copies of repair bills and letters to the manufacturer, attach them to your completed VOQ.

If you are not sure of any information requested in the VOQ, leave the box blank. But we must have the Vehicle Identification Number (VIN) to process your questionnaire. The VIN is a 17-digit number that can be seen through the front windshield on the driver's side of the dash-

board. When reporting a tire problem, the DOT identification (located on the sidewall) is needed.

The VOQ asks if you authorize NHTSA to provide a copy of your report to the manufacturer. If so, check YES on the VOQ and sign and date it. When we send the report to the manufacturer, it often results in a satisfactory solution of individual problems. But NHTSA cannot *order* corrective action unless the vehicle or item of equipment is determined to have a defect and a safety recall campaign is conducted.

Check out our home page for information on a variety of vehicle safety topics.  
<http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/>



## Vehicle Owner's Questionnaire

**NATIONWIDE 1-800-424-9393**  
**DC METRO AREA (202) 366-0123**

**FOR AGENCY USE ONLY**

Date Received

Od-or	_____	_____
rt-dt	_____	_____
od-rt	_____	_____
up-ltr	_____	_____

Reference No.

**OWNER INFORMATION** (Type or Print)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Street No. \_\_\_\_\_ Apt. No. \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Day Time Telephone Number  
( )

***Do you authorize NHTSA to provide a copy of this report to the manufacturer of your vehicle?    ☐ YES    ☐ NO***  
***In the absence of an authorization, NHTSA WILL NOT provide your name and address to the vehicle manufacturer.***

Signature of Owner \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

## VEHICLE INFORMATION

Vehicle Ident. No. (VIN.) <i>(Located at bottom of windshield on driver's side)</i>	Vehicle Make	Vehicle Model	Vehicle Year	Current Odometer Reading					

Purchase Date

Dealer's Name \_\_\_\_\_

☐ New    ☐ Used

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Engine Size ☐ Turbo  
(CID/CC/L) \_\_\_\_\_ ☐ Diesel  
No. Cylinders \_\_\_\_\_ ☐ Gas  
☐ Fuel Injection

### Transmission Type

☐ Yes

## Restraint System

☐ Driverside Airbag      ☐ Motorbelt  
☐ Passengerside Airbag      ☐ 2-Point Belt  
☐ 3-Point Belt

Cruise

☐ Yes

☐ No

## Drivetrain

☐ Front  
☐ Rear  
☐ 4-Wheel

## Body Style

☐ Stawag  
☐ 4-Door  
☐ 2-Door

☐ Hatch Back

☐ Pick Up Truck  
☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

### FAILED COMPONENT(S)/PART(S) INFORMATION

Component	Part Name(s)	Location		Failed Part(s)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Left <input type="checkbox"/> Front	<input type="checkbox"/> Right <input type="checkbox"/> Rear	<input type="checkbox"/> Original <input type="checkbox"/> Replacement	
No. of Failures	Date(s) of Failure(s) _____ Mileage at Failure(s) _____ Vehicle Speed at Failure(s) _____	Manufacturer Contacted? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		NHTSA Previously Contacted? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	

### APPLICABLE ACCIDENT INFORMATION

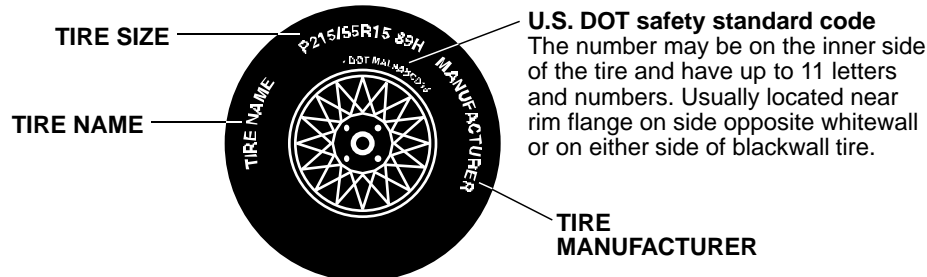
*(Use reverse side for more detailed information)*

Accident <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Fire <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Number Persons Injured	Number of Fatalities	Estimated Property Damage \$ _____	Reported to Police <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
--	--	------------------------	----------------------	---------------------------------------	--

**INFORMATION ON TIRE FAILURE(S) (IF APPLICABLE)**

To report **defective** or **failed** tires provide the following: DOT Number, Tire Manufacturer, Tire Name, Tire Size (include all numbers and letters).

**Note:** This information not required for normal operation tires.

[illegible]

20 lines for return address

Fold to show Return Address (no stamp needed) Fasten with tape or staple and mail

U.S. Department  
of Transportation  
**National Highway  
Traffic Safety  
Administration**

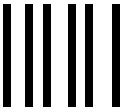
400 Seventh St., S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20590  
Official Business  
Penalty for Private Use \$300

**BUSINESS REPLY MAIL**

FIRST CLASS PERMIT NO 73173 WASHINGTON, D.C.

POSTAGE WILL BE PAID BY NATL. HWY. TRAFFIC SAFETY ADMIN.

U.S. Department of Transportation  
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration  
Auto Safety Hotline, NEF-11 HL  
400 7th St., S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20590



NO POSTAGE  
NECESSARY  
IF MAILED  
IN THE  
UNITED STATES

